**Minutes of Steering Committee Meeting**

**National Platform on Land and Water Management**

**Date**: July 26, 2011

**Venue**: ILRI Ethiopia Campus

**Time**: 9:00am-12:30pm

**Participants**: Adane Kassa, Water Action

Betru Nedassa, MoA

Daniel Danano, MoA

Dejene Abesha, MoA

Feyera Abdi, SoS Sahel

Kifle Abegaz, CRS

Zemede Abebe, Ripple

Tseday Ayalew, IWMI

Kees Swaans, ILRI

Tilahun Amede, ILRI/IWMI

**Agenda** :

1. Introduction and objective
2. Key findings of interviews + discussion from selected and large land and water projects in Ethiopia
3. Operationalization of national platforms in land, water and NRM

* Principles and functions of platform
* Modalities (how)
* Who (who takes initiative/organizes it etc.)
* What are priority issues for the national platforms? what do we want to do in first meeting?
* Strategy to sustain platform

1. Role of working group (steering committee) related to the platform
2. Remaining issues that need to be addressed in relation to First National Platform meeting
3. Closure
4. **Introduction and Objective**

Kees Swaans welcomed participants and started with a brief introduction of the Nile Basin Development Challenge (NBDC) Program, and why it took the initiate for this meeting. The NBDC was initiated in 2010 and aims to improve rainwater management in the Ethiopian highlands of the Blue Nile basin - taking account of landscape management, upstream/downstream relationships and cross-sector collaborations, to improve ecosystems and enhancing livelihoods. The NBDC is a consortium between various actors in Ethiopia and beyond led by the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), and is supported by the Challenge Program for Water and Food (CPWF). The program has five components that are described as:

▪ Nile 1 on learning from the past on rainwater management systems (RWMS);  
▪ Nile 2 on integrated rainwater management strategies;  
▪ Nile 3 On targeting and scaling out of RWMS;

▪ Nile 4 on assessing and anticipating consequences of innovation of RWMS;  
▪ Nile 5 on innovation, communication and coordination

The objective of this meeting was to pave the way for the establishment of the National Platform as agreed on a ‘planning’ workshop for national level actors held on April 8, 2010, where the need, purpose and design of a national platform on land and water management was discussed. At the same meeting it was agreed that a small working group (from now on referred to as steering group) of interested individuals and/or organizations would be established to take the results of workshop further and plan the first ‘official’ national platform meeting.

To better facilitate this process the NBDC (Nile 5) has been conducting interviews from April-June with informants from several key projects/networks that appear relevant for land and water management in the Blue Nile Basin. The findings of the interviews were discussed and reflected upon to start off a discussion on the design of the National Platform meetings, priority issues and the role of the Steering Committee.

1. **Key findings of interviews + discussion**

From April-June, the NBDC has conducted interviews with informants from six key projects/programs on land and water management in the Nile Basin. Project/programs were selected based on regional coverage, amount of investment, recognition by wider actors and diversity of type of project/programs (e.g. government-based or NGO-based) and engagement areas); the idea behind the study was that an overview of the existing experiences on the area of Land and Water Management could contribute to the establishment and functionality of the platform. The findings were presented by Kees Swaans (see attached; please note that these are preliminary findings).

**Comments**

The following comments were given by members of the committee after the presentation.

* It is important to identify major/key lessons from the experiences and take those to the platform establishment process. Some concrete ideas like how to sustain the platform must be considered; and also questions like, what does sustainability, participation and demand driven actually mean, and how can that be translated into action? How this platform differs from other platforms? Also the issues of institutionalization of best practices and capitalizing on good examples of Multiple Use of Water must be considered.
* It might be useful to envision the platform as a network of projects or maybe even as a National Think-Tank with a mandate on land and water management; this may ensure its purpose of existence beyond projects. It would also help to get a clear picture of existing networks and try to define the added value of this platform, as it will justify its establishment and help to find its niche.
* Note should be made that it is important to work across sectors; e.g. it would be important to include important actors like the Ministry of Water Resources and academic institutions like Addis Ababa University (AAU). In relation to research center and universities, thought must be given of how lessons learned on land and water management can be linked to curriculum development to instill the young generation in agriculture (Ripple has some experience with this).
* Factors like incentives, institutional commitments, effective coordination and involving in timely issues will enable to attract more key actors plus ensure sustainability as well. In addition, harmonization among different actors, accountability in the quality & standard of work, serving as a forum for the key players and shared responsibility between organizations will contribute to sustainability; furthermore, we should not only think about the sustainability of the platform, but how to sustain the *message* of the platform
* Purpose of the platform must be well articulated. The need for the platform is to create a proactive forum that brings evidence, shares experiences, identifies gaps, highlights scientific evidence to other forums like the SLM platform and serves as knowledge base. It shall also emphasize water as an entry point to focus on land and resource management. The platform will be open for participation for any organization with stake in land and water management and will be Ethiopia-specific though will be interacting with regional players (e.g. IMAWESSA).
* It is important that lessons and experiences are translated into action on the ground, not as a set of fragmented actions, but as so called (integrated)’models’ that have potential for out and up scaling. Institutional challenges and higher level institutional linkages also have to be considered to feed ideas to policy makers/level.

**NOTES**

Tilahun Amede made the following remarks in relation to the comments above.

* There is a broad understanding between IWMI and ILRI that this platform is hoped to be the major platform for projects interested to work on water, land and environment in Ethiopia.. Even at a later stage where NBDC may phase out, the ambition is that emerging projects will take it over. Anyone with a need for such forum shall bring the agenda and discuss with the platform rather than establishing a new one. This shall be promoted in every way possible to realize the idea.
* The NBDC has been setting up local innovation platforms in three action sites (Jeldu, Fogera, and Diga), which will work with communities directly to generate evidence that would be used by the national platform; it is the idea that local experiences and institutional challenges will be fed into regional platforms and national platforms. The regional platforms have not been established yet, but plans for these are being discussed with national partners(e.g. with Bahir Dar with ARARI). The condensed evidence will then be injected to the National Platform.
* NBDC research is designed in a way that has a multiple and cross scale engagements to serve multi-purpose livelihood and resilience issues inclusive or water, crop, livelihood, food etc. The project proposal will be shared to committee members so that all will have comprehensive knowledge.
* Efforts will be made to invite and involve universities in the national platform

1. **Operationalization of platform**
2. **Principles and functions of platform**

* Harmonization of approaches
* Bring experiences across sectors together (using water as entry point, but link to land management, livestock, environment, livelihoods etc.)
* Discuss best practices/evidence
* Function as a knowledge base (e.g. through documentation) on technical issues, but also on processes (e.g. on how to link institutions)
* Link ‘talking’ to action; we need to bring experiences and lessons learned together into integrated models that can be tested, replicated and scaled out and up
* Provide best practices/workable strategies to actors (communication)
* Link best practices to University curricula (link with education/capacity building by developing modules)
* Ensure institutional linkages between local, regional, national level (flows between them)
* Highlight issues that are important for policy makers
* Link to other platforms in synergistic way (e.g. SLM platform)

1. **Modalities (how)**

* The steering group will come together on a regular basis and is responsible for setting the agenda (thematic areas and priorities) and decide on next steps; they are also expected to make use of their linkages/relations and mobilize other organizations/players if appropriate
* Task/working groups will be established based on perceived needs by steering committee; the working groups (professional/ad-hoc) will get a TOR (their tasks will depend on the topic and also depends on how the group perceives the topic itself).
* The steering group will determine together with the working groups how ‘results/products’ will be presented in the national platform; the idea is that it should make use of the platform as a way to get insights/feedback from various perspectives.
* Besides presentations/discussions, also field visits could form part of the activities undertaken by the platform
* The steering group will decide how outcomes/results/emergent findings from the national platforms will be followed-up or taken forward (e.g. to policy makers)
* The steering group members may also have to be represented in other forums/platforms if appropriate
* The NBDC will function as secretariat and focal point for the first few years; it will play an important role in preparing agendas for the steering group, general support, and communication with its members)
* The secretariat will also set up a Portal (for documentation of experiences etc.)
* A common e-mail address for platform members will be set up; also newsletters, web site/blog for sharing info/informing could be important communication means. The NBDC will cover the kick off cost and mechanisms will be devised with the communication team of NBDC.
* Gaps/functions in various thematic areas/topics need to be translated into action plans (to be done by secretariat together with chair/co-chair, and later to be approved/prioritized by steering committee)

1. **What are priority issues?**

* Identifying and documenting best practices and establishing modalities for scaling up (what are constraints)
* What do sustainability, demand driven, and participation means and how can we translate it into action? What are the experiences so far? This relates also to issues as community ownership, mobilization, dependency, attitudes of people/farmers, and collection action
* Technological innovation; farmer innovation; what works; what needs to be in place; participatory technology development (what is promising); research gaps for generating effective technologies (to share)
* Small scale irrigation; how to make it more effective?
* Multiple Use Systems (MUS) – how to integrate MUS with emerging investments/irrigation and ensure sustainability
* Livestock management versus natural resources (potential tension)/ establishing drinking water points close to livestock was mentioned as a way to improve productivity and reduce impact on natural resources
* Access to energy; most people use wood as energy source, which has implications for NRM; area closures were mentioned as strategies to re-establish natural resources
* Rain water management (link water management with landscape scale)
* Upstream - downstream linkages
* Issues as land investments, land tenure institutions, and certification; these have important implications for access to land and water
* How to link economic incentives with NRM / production and Income Generation
* Increase resilience capacity of ecosystem (physical and social); sustainable land management; soil organic matter management for SLM or mitigating climate change / climate smart agriculture
* Link research, practice, and policy (around emerging issues: climate change, etc.).How to influence policy and engage policy makers); population pressure was mentioned as a concern) to land degradation (and has a political dimension)
* Gender in water management; women are key players, but not always included, e.g. due to land issues, access to credit etc. (important to think of technologies that suit them; labor saving technologies)

1. **Role of steering committee**

* The steering committee will play a central role in the national platform; they decide on thematic areas and priorities, the establishment and TORs for working groups, and how results/findings are followed up. Members also have the responsibility to mobilize their networks if appropriate and to represent the platform in other fora. It was also agreed that the current members will take part in the steering committee, but other members could be invited for meeting if felt appropriate.
* The platform should not be seen as the main responsibility of NBDC, but should be widely shared by participating members; hence it was decided that it would be good to select a chair and co-chair for the steering committee from both government based organizations and NGOs (outside the NBDC). The steering committee has selected Adane Kassa (WaterAction) and Betru Nedassa (MoA – MERET) as Chair and Co-Chair respectively.
* The secretariat will be at NBDC. The Secrectariat will start drafting a ToR for the two positions (Chair and Co-Chair) and the Steering Committee, as well as for the working groups and the platform; these will be shared and discussed first with the chair and co-chair for feedback, and later send by e-mail to other members of the Steering Committee for feedback (the final version will be presented for approval in the next meeting of the Steering Committee. Daniel Danano and Zemede Abebe have promised to share TOR they use for respectively the SLM platform and Ripple. The TOR shall include how often the Committee will meet as well.

1. **First National Platform meeting**

* It was decided the platform shall meet twice a year and that it will be a full day meeting. To ensure that there will be enough time for working groups to prepare, the first platform meeting will take place around late October or early November.
* The thematic areas and priorities will be decided up in the next Steering Committee meeting, as well as the establishment of working groups and how (format) the ‘issues’ will be presented/discussed in the national platform meeting.

1. **Action items**

* Secretariat to make TORs for Steering Committee, working groups and platform; these will be shared and discussed with chair and co-chair and accordingly adapted, after which they will be shared with other members of the committee for feedback
* Gaps/functions in various thematic areas/topics need to be translated into action plans (to be done by secretariat together with chair/co-chair, and later to be prioritized and approved by steering committee)
* Daniel Danano and Zemede Abebe have promised to share TOR they use for respectively the SLM platform and Ripple.
* Next meeting for steering committee will probably be late August/early September. The following issues will need to be discussed at that meeting:
  + Approval of TOR
  + The thematic areas and priorities will be decided upon
  + The establishment of working groups
  + How (format) the ‘issues’ will be presented/discussed in the national; platform meeting.
  + Place and exact date of the 1st national platform meeting.